

RECORD RESEARCH
BACK ISSUES
WHAT'S AVAILABLE

(See page 3)



THE MAGAZINE OF
RECORD STATISTICS
AND INFORMATION

OCTOBER 1972
ISSUE 118

30c

record
research

THE
DORSEY
YEARS
(see page 2)

FLEXO

FLEXO San Francisco's Obscure Record Company

exploratory research by Dave Cotter

The purpose of this exploratory research is largely for one selfish reason to encourage others to contribute any additional information to this project and expand the knowledge of this unusual label. I would particularly like to hear from anybody that have any of these flexible recordings.

Dave Cotter
203 Burlwood Dr.
Scotts Valley, Calif. 95060



- Illustration of normal Flexo label (George Druck issue)
(see page 10 for extra comments No. 1)

During the 1920's, hundreds of short lived record firms were brought into being. One, had something unique to offer . . . an unbreakable, flexible phonograph record.

Sometime in 1925, the Warner Record Company set up shop at 1319 E. 9th in Kansas City, Mo. and produced "New Flexo" records. This itself is a minor mystery as there is no indication of a Flexo (or even an Old Flexo) that preceeded this. The company later changed its name to Wabine Company and remained in Kansas City until 1927 or 1928. Besides recording and pressing some very acceptable dance numbers (a good portion of these by Johnnie Campbell's Orch.), the company also increased its revenue by making custom recordings. This phase of the operation was not unique as almost all record firms did this on a small scale, but it would seem that the Warner/Wabine Company made more custom than commercial discs.

Probably the largest special account of this concern was the Unity School of Christianity. Warner/Wabine recorded and pressed a considerable number of discs for them and they were released as "Unity" records. Other accounts as well used the Warner/Wabine custom recordings and usually their name was substituted in place of New Flexo.

The New Flexo, Unity and other custom recordings used primarily a three digit master series. The known range is 125 to 935. However, one exception has turned up . . . a Unity record with no artist credits

Prosperity Record (P-15-1)

Healing Record (H-15-2)

An assumption might be made that the letters P and H were codes for Prosperity and Healing, but the hyphenated master creates a whole new series as master 151 is already accounted for.

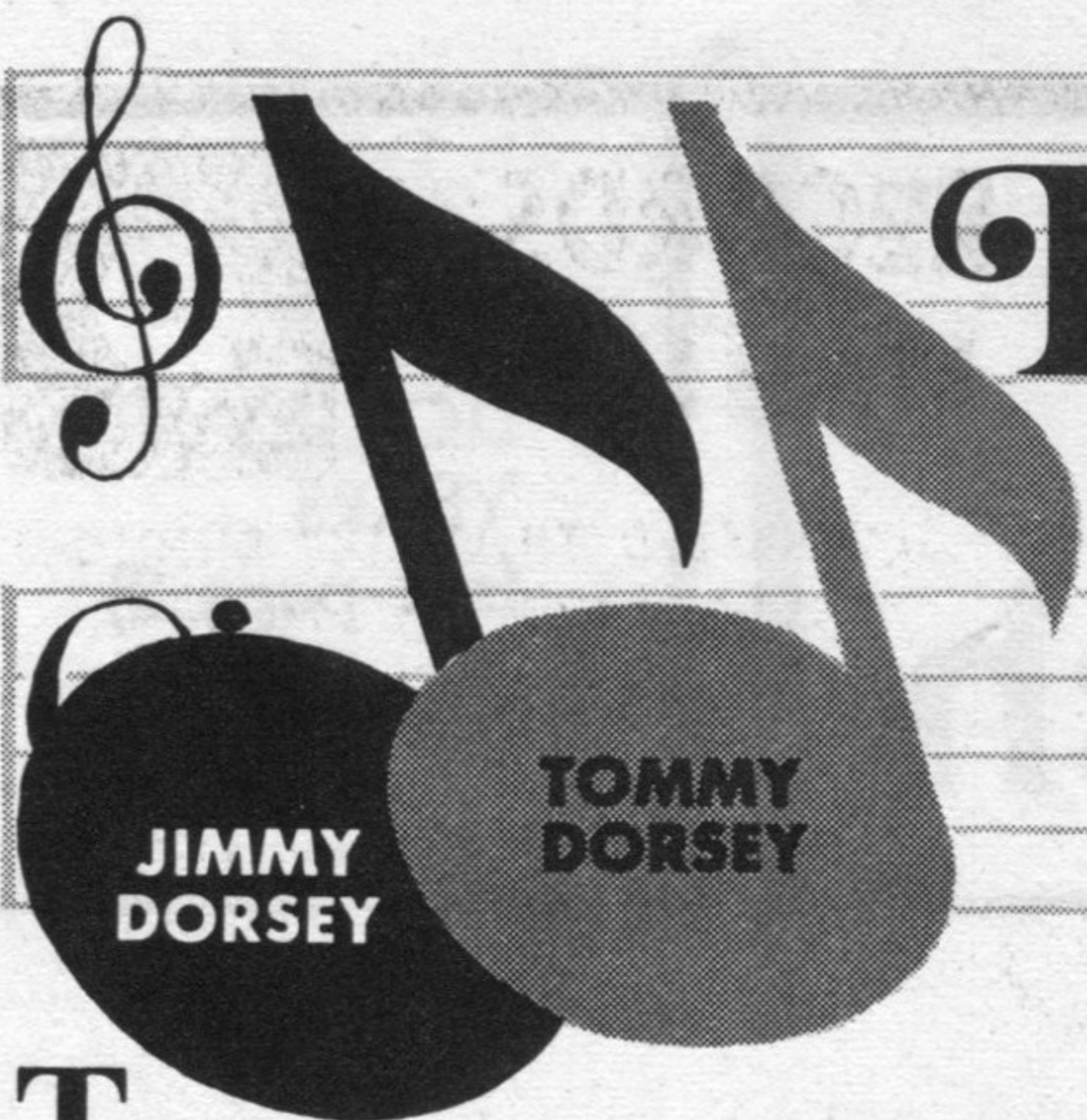
A brief notation about the release numbers. All Unity records seen to date have used a 400 series beginning with 400 to at least 432. The custom recordings apparently used no release numbers. The New Flexo records used release numbers (sometimes), and have been found in the 300 series.

After the demise of the Kansas City Wabine Company, a new corporation was formed in San Francisco. This was the Pacific Coast Record Corp. which also made flexible records (called Flexo), which is not surprising since Mr. Jesse J. Warner, fresh out of Kansas City, was the recording engineer of this new company.

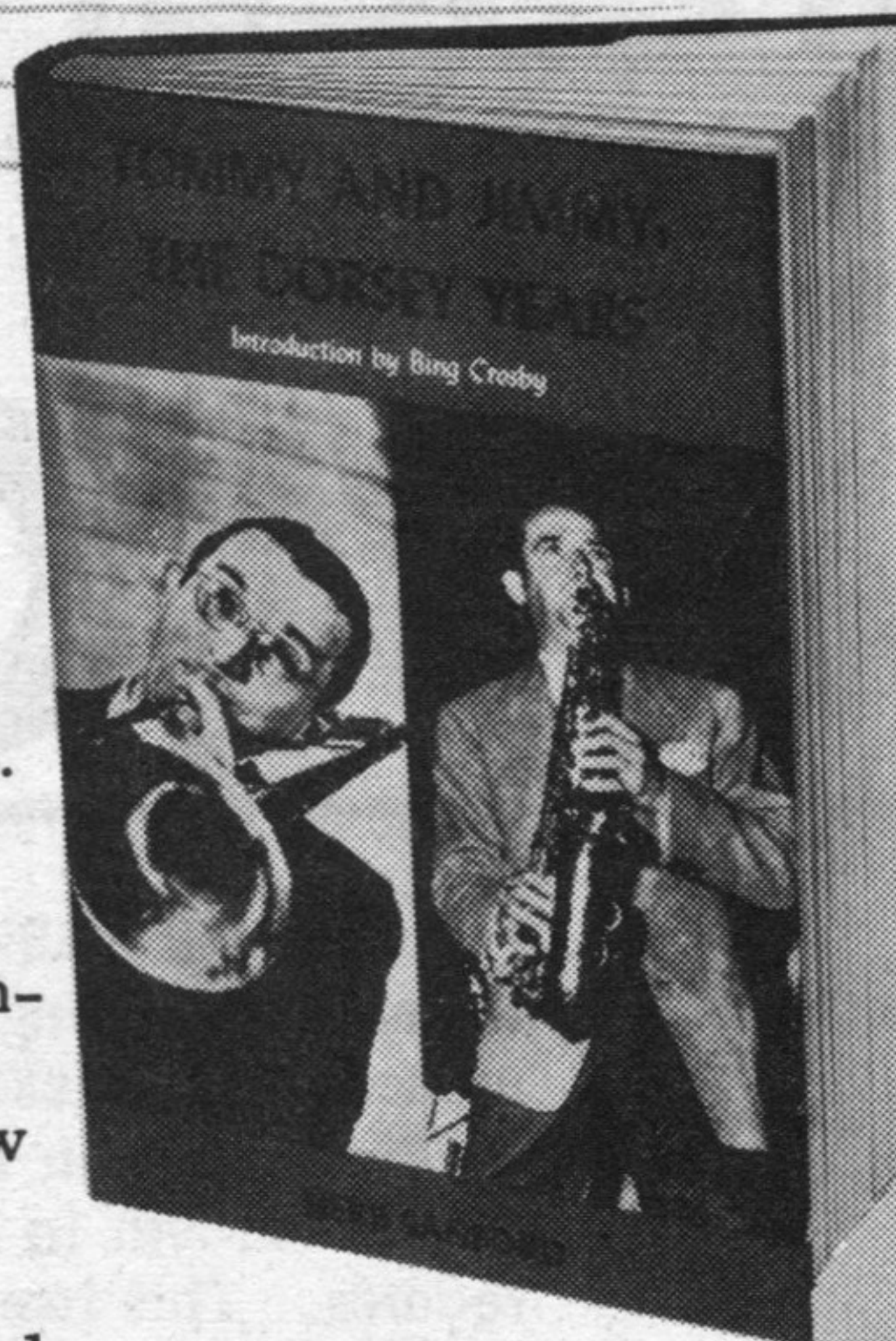
The Pacific Coast Record Corp. was incorporated Dec. 26, 1929 and had offices at 1040 Geary St. in San Francisco. A check of the city directories shows as many name variations as years

1930	Flexo Theatre Record Corp. Ltd.
1931	Pacific Coast Record Corp.
1932	Flexo Pacific Coast Record Corp.
1933	Pacific Coast Record Corp. Ltd.

(continued on page 4)



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- ✓ Personal experiences with the fabled Bix Beiderbecke. Dawn over Manhattan, and the birth of two Bix classics.
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EXCELLO 2206

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177 3rd Ave., N., Nashville

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NASHBORO - BLUES REVIEWS by HANSEN
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NASCO - ADDITIONS & CORRECTIONS
ZIL - LABEL INDEX (Issue 1 to 8)

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(OH WHAT A DR
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CHUCK BROV
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**"HELLO
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LIGHTNIN' SLIM

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Label, Index of Issue 1 to 8.

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Issue 12: Coral 65000, Groove,
and Okeh 6800

Issue 13: Checker, Miracle,
Sunrise

Issue 14: Columbia 30000 and
Mercury 8000

Issue 15: Manor, Arco, Regis
and J.O.B.

Issue 16: Sittin' In With, Jax,
Harlem, Delta, Jade, Super Disc.

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THIS PUBLICATION IS A SUBSIDIARY OF 'RECORD RESEARCH MAGAZINE' AND IS
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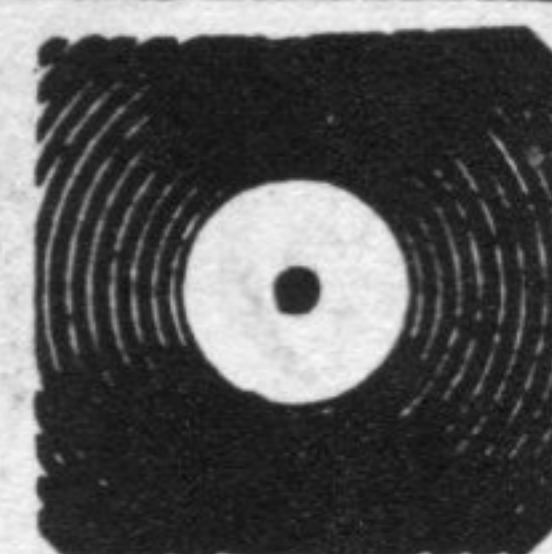
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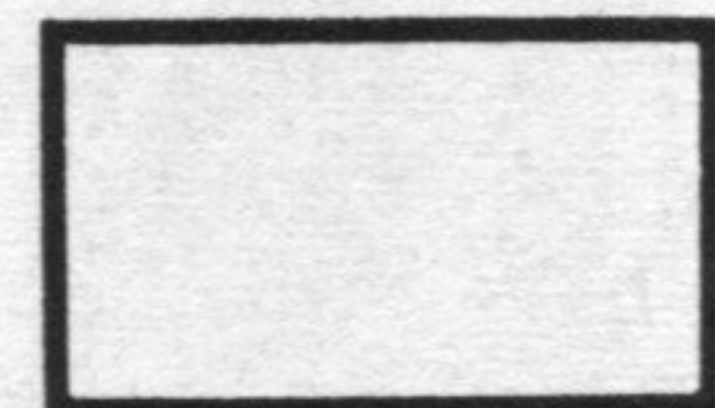
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FLEXO San Francisco's Obscure Record Company

Like its predecessor, this company also recorded and pressed both commercial and custom records ... and also leaned heavily on the special custom recordings (radio advertising, theatre records, promotional discs, etc.). Just as long as anybody had the money to pay for making a record, Flexo would make it. This would explain some of the questionable talent on a few of these records, but regardless of this, many good commercial recordings were made.

The Flexo records, if nothing else, had to be the most unique of its day due to the various sizes, colors and shapes. Record sizes ranged between 3 inch and 16 inch ... and were not always round, as a 3 by 5 advertising record made by Flexo for Martha Washington Candy has been reported. And Flexo produced records at both 78 and 33 rpm, including one (a test pressing) that was recorded at 78 on one side and 33 on the other. As for the colors, there seemed to be no limit ... blue, pink, green, red, yellow and anything else. Mr. Warner felt that color was important for one reason only ... that the record buyer's attention would be focused on brightly colored records rather than the dull, conventional black.

The Pacific Coast Record Corp. filed for bankruptcy on May 8, 1934 but not before establishing another company, on July 18, 1932, for manufacturing advertising records and radio transcriptions. These records were called Titan and altho a legally separate operation, Titan used the same address as Flexo on Geary in San Francisco. Mr. Jesse J. Warner was also employed by this concern and left shortly before the company ceased to exist sometime in 1939.

During the period of 1939-40, the address of 1040 Geary was occupied by two other recording companies. The May 1939 City Directory shows,

Titan Productions 1040 Geary OR 3671
National Transcription Recording Co., 1040 Geary,
TU 1916

and the Feb. 1940 Directory shows only ...

Lewis Recording Studios Inc. 1040 Geary OR 3671
(interesting to note that Lewis Studios had the same phone number as Titan).

The Nov. 1940 Directory shows Lewis Studios to have folded by the absence of its listing, or for any record company at 1040 Geary.

The Flexos, Titans, etc. began numbering their masters in a three digit series. The range known at present is 124 to 1797. It is not known if the Flexo masters were a separate series from Titan. There has been no duplication of numbers to date, altho it is suspected that they were two different series. A very interesting exception turns up on a Flexo which is credited to Hollywood Film Enterprises Inc. rather than Pacific Coast Record Corp. and is an interview with Ann Harding by Louella Parsons. This recording employs masters 6-59-C and 6-60-B.

As for release numbers, the Titans and other special recordings did not use these except for an occasional sub-series. The regular Flexo series was numbered to at least 148 with the earliest known release number of 105. Flexo records that were recorded at 33 rpm were usually assigned a letter rather than a number, but even this is rather vague as two totally different records have turned up that are lettered Series Q. And of course many Flexos did not use any release numbers at all.

On some Flexo recordings there appears a notation, Patent Pending. In the hope that Mr. Warner's wonderful flexible record was patented, a check of the patent gazettes was made. Only three patents were issued to J. J. Warner and none of these had anything to do with a flexible record. The patents were for a manually operated phonograph and recording and reproducing devices. If he ever did apply for a patent for his colorful, flexible record, it would seem that the U. S. Patent Office did not think enough of the idea to grant a patent.

After Jesse J. Warner left Titan, he established his own business concern in San Francisco. Modestly, he named it J.J. Warner Company and was active from 1939 to 1941. His

recording company was responsible for the manufacturing of what he called Automatic Voice Studios. These were machines that, upon deposit of coins, would record and dispense a record of one's voice.

While this is intended to be only a brief history of Mr. Warner's recording companies, a few notations must be made regarding the Flexo recording artists.

GEORGE DRUCK'S SWEETS BALLROOM ORCH. Mr. Druck has enjoyed a long time association with Anson Weeks. By his own recollection, this was the only record he made for Flexo and the personnel was:

George Druck	trombone
Jack Harris	drums
Cy Eynon	alto sax
Larry Kohler	tenor and bass sax
Bill Snow	first trumpet
Rod McCauley	piano

and three others Mr. Druck was not too sure of.

This particular record had no release number. Titles and masters were... The Talk of the Town (266)

Tiger Rag (267)

JACK COAKLEY'S ORCH. (no relation to Tom Coakley) An extremely fine dance band that many San Franciscans may remember thru his radio broadcasts over KPO and some may recall dancing to his music at the Claremont Hotel, the Saddle Rock Cafe, Tait's at the Beach and Cabilia Cafe. The ever-popular Maurice Gunsby began his career with Jack Coakley but left before the Flexo recordings were made. Mr. Coakley was the musical director for Flexo until 1932. A partial personnel of his band would be ...

Jack Coakley	piano
Frank Gaffney	tuba and string bass
Paul Slobody	drums and vocal
Harry Fish	sax
Bill Starkey	sax
Henry Warner	vocalist

(no relation to J. J. Warner)

The Flexo records are the only recordings ever issued by Jack Coakley's Orchestra altho in 1925 he cut some accoustic sides for Victor but were never released due to the transition to electrical recordings.

LEW REYNOLDS AND HIS ORCH. Recorded good dance numbers, sometimes used a vocalist by the name of Jack Dean, and was probably Flexo's house band after Jack Coakley left the organization.

Other bay area musicians had recorded for Flexo and in mentioning a few of these names, hopefully others will turn up. Perhaps someone will be able to add to the list or elaborate on the following artists.

"ROWDY" CECIL WRIGHT (a western vocalist who was associated with Mac's Haywire Orchestra), HENRY STARR (piano and vocal), JIMMIE MOSLEY, THE HARMONIZERS, and FAY ELLIOTT AND THE NEW YORKERS.

Hopefully, other collectors may be able to add to this information of the company, the artists and of the recordings. Perhaps at a later date, if enough information comes to light, a listing of all the known Flexo, New Flexo, Titan, Unity and other special recordings may be printed. I would especially like to hear from anyone that has any of these records. And for the Southern Calif. collectors ... what ever became of the Warner family? In 1946, the Warner Recording Co. was operating at 3402 W. Pico in Los Angeles. And in 1949, the company (now Warner and Sons) was located at 300 No. Lake in Pasadena, Calif. What ever happened to J. J. Warner or his sons (Raymond and James)? One clue may be Eleanor K. Warner (Jesse's wife). Her last known address in 1962 was 6205½ Romaine in Los Angeles.

Dave Cotter
203 Burlwood Dr.
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PHONE MONTROSE 0151



Picture of Jack Coakley's Orch. circa 1925
Newspaper ad for Taits at the Beach and Coakley's Orch.



Stock Certificate of Pacific Coast Record Corp.



- Illustration of a normal Titan label.



- Illustration of both sides of Ann Harding - Louella Parson Flexo

Three J.J. Warner patents ...

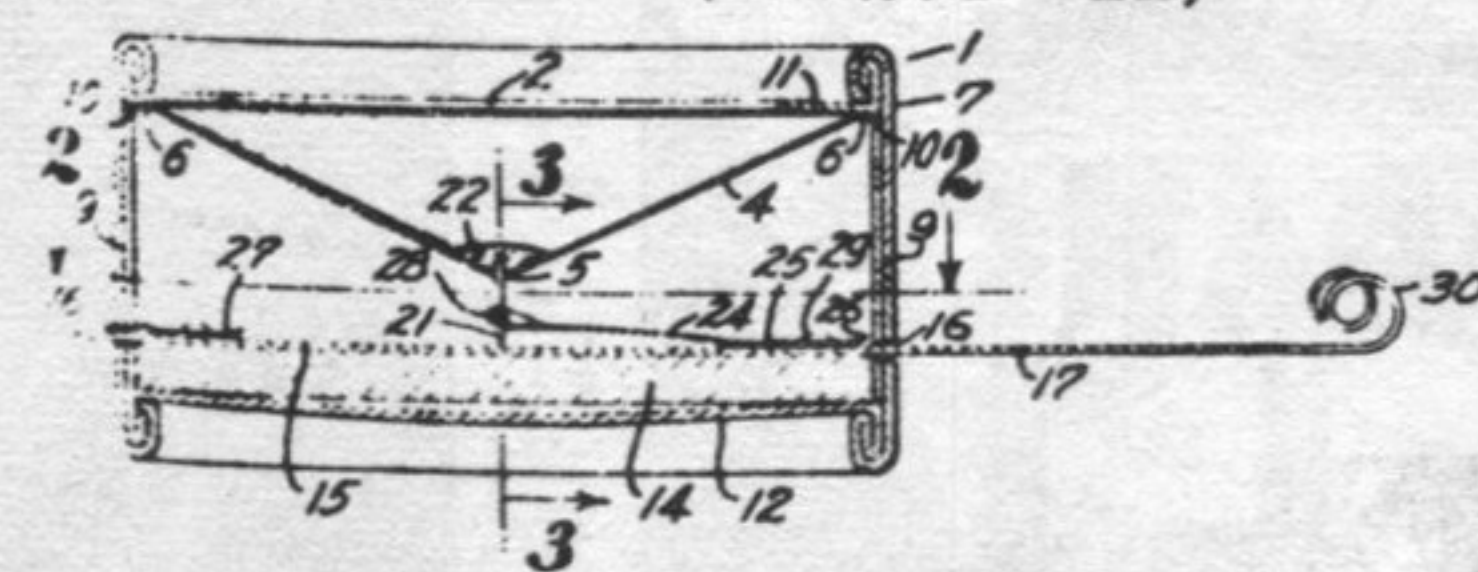
U. S. PATENT OFFICE

OFFICIAL GAZETTE

APRIL 16, 1935

1,998,149

MANUALLY OPERATED PHONOGRAPH
Jesse J. Warner, Burlingame, Calif.
Application October 28, 1933, Serial No. 695,575
12 Claims. (Cl. 274-11)

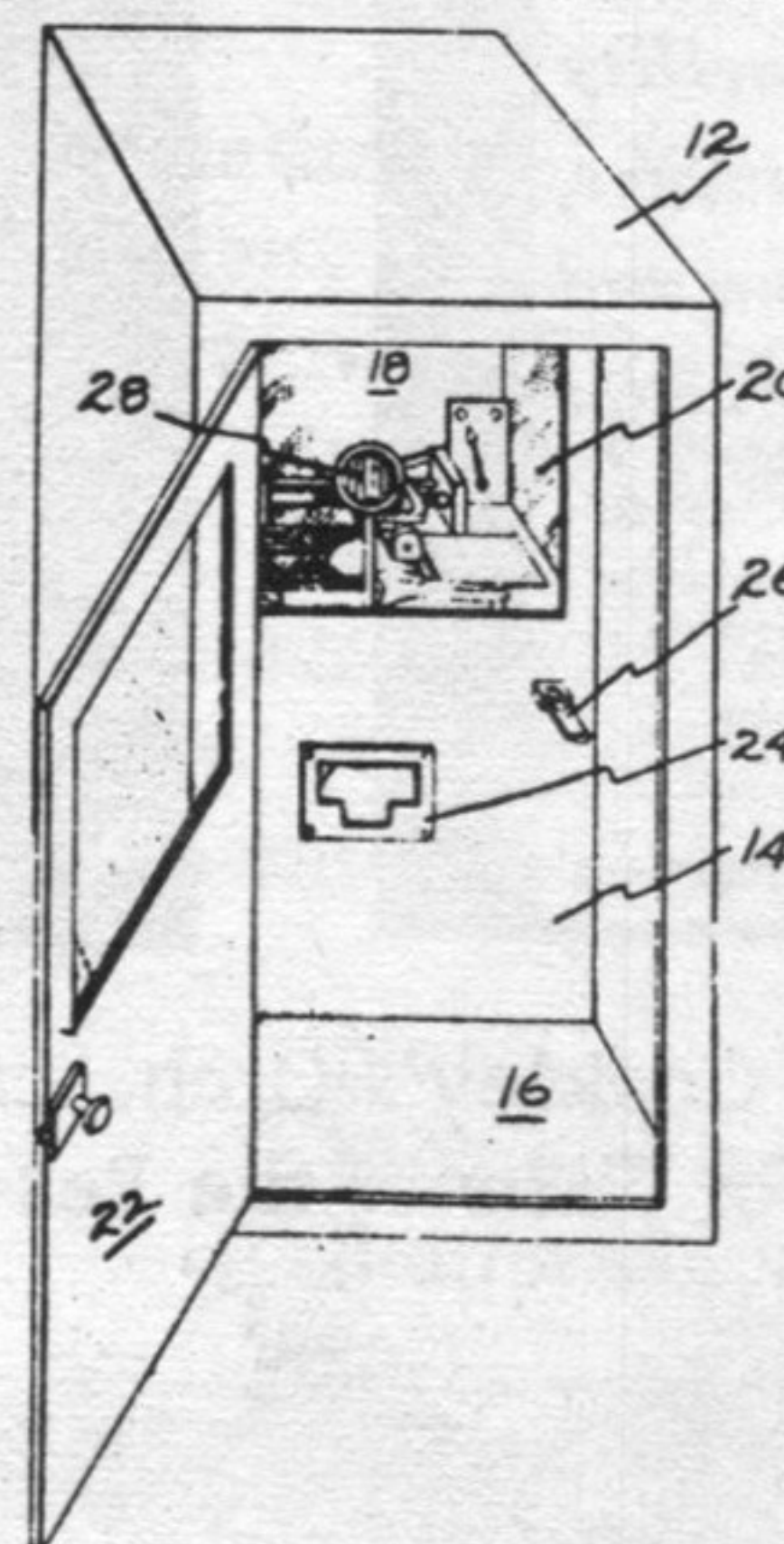


A manually operated phonograph comprising in combination, a flexible record strip of limited length having a longitudinal sound track engraved thereon, an air actuating device, means for maintaining said track in contact with said air actuating device when said strip is manually progressed, and means for preventing said strip from being pulled out of contact with said air actuating device when the end of said strip is approached.

JANUARY 24, 1941 2,229,430

AUTOMATIC RECORDING AND REPRODUCING DEVICE

Jesse J. Warner, San Francisco, Calif.
Application June 26, 1939, Serial No. 281,209
16 Claims. (Cl. 179-100.4)



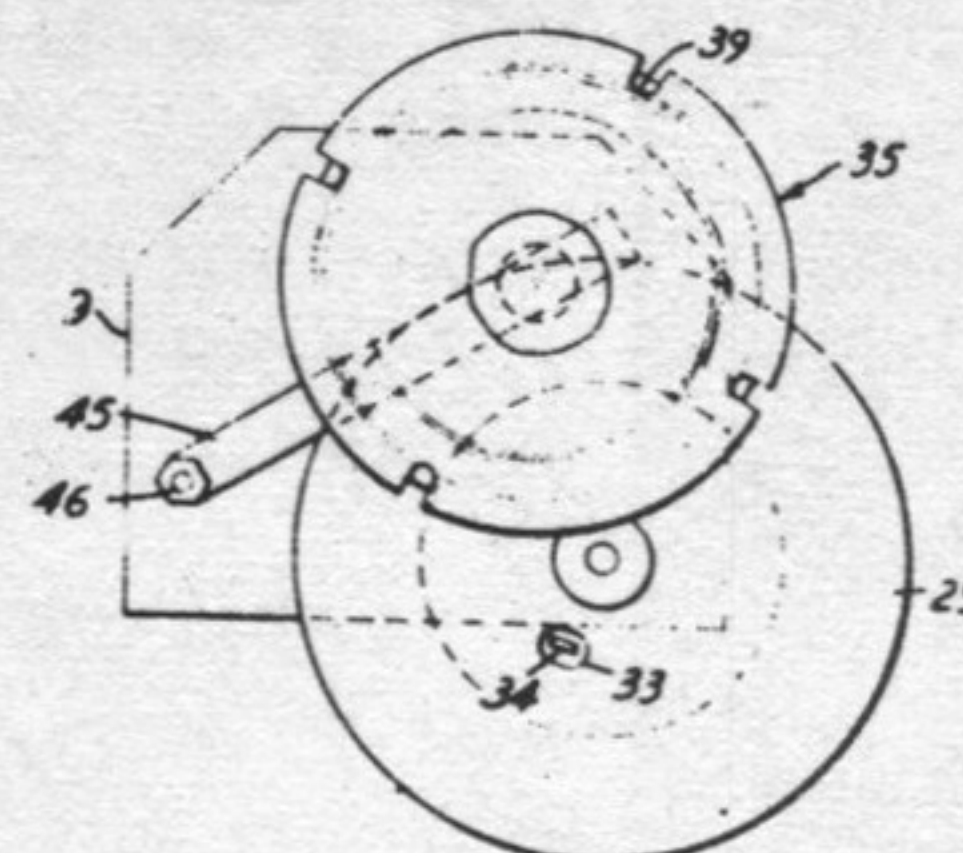
1. An automatic recording and playback machine comprising a motor energized by a main control switch, a turntable driven by said motor, means for placing an uncut record over said turntable, means for raising said turntable to engage and rotate said record, a cutter, means for lowering said cutter onto said rotating record, means for traversing said cutter across said record at a constant relatively slow rate, means for lifting said cutter from said record after a defined length of track is cut thereon, means for returning said cutter to initial position at a relatively rapid rate, and means for visually indicating the beginning and end of cutting.

MAY 27, 1952

2,598,026

PHONOGRAPH HAVING SPEAKER PICKUP UNIT

Jesse J. Warner, Los Angeles, Calif.
Application September 23, 1949, Serial No. 117,317
17 Claims. (Cl. 274-9)



1. A speaker-pickup unit comprising a rigid dish having a peripheral rim and a centrally located opening, a flexible diaphragm secured at its periphery to said rim, a pickup needle extending through said opening and directly attached to said diaphragm, and means for supporting said dish, said means comprising a flexible, resilient strip attached to the side of the dish opposite the diaphragm and having an opening therein correlated with the opening through the dish through which the needle extends, and a support for said unit, said strip being fastened to said support at a position remote from the dish.

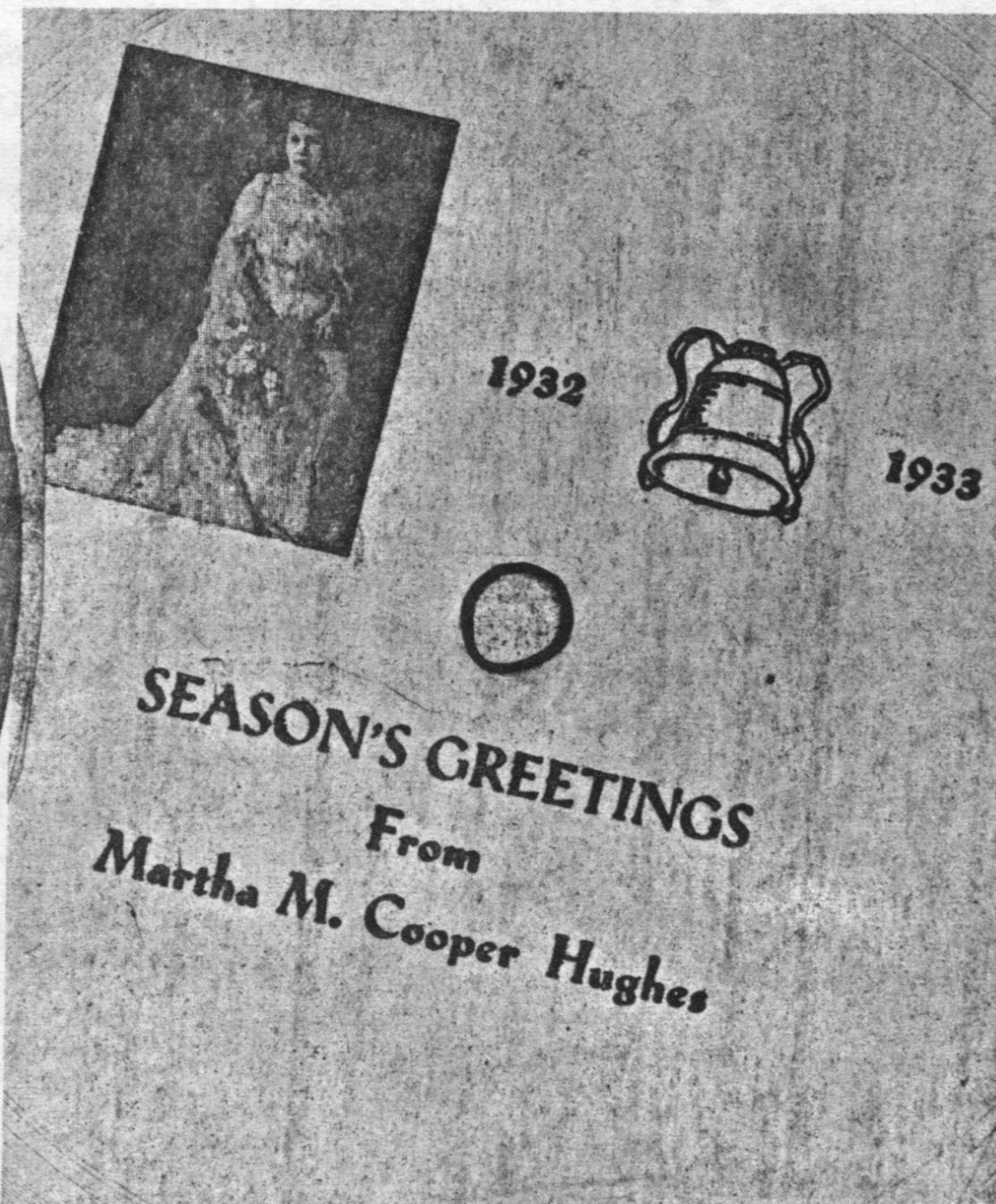


- A NEW FLEXO RECORD sleeve for use by UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY (Record Dept.), 917 Tracy, Kansas City Mo. (orig. size 8½" square) (courtesy of Bob Healy)



One of many Flexo label variations (illustration has no visible artist credits)

(see page 10 for extra comments No. 2)



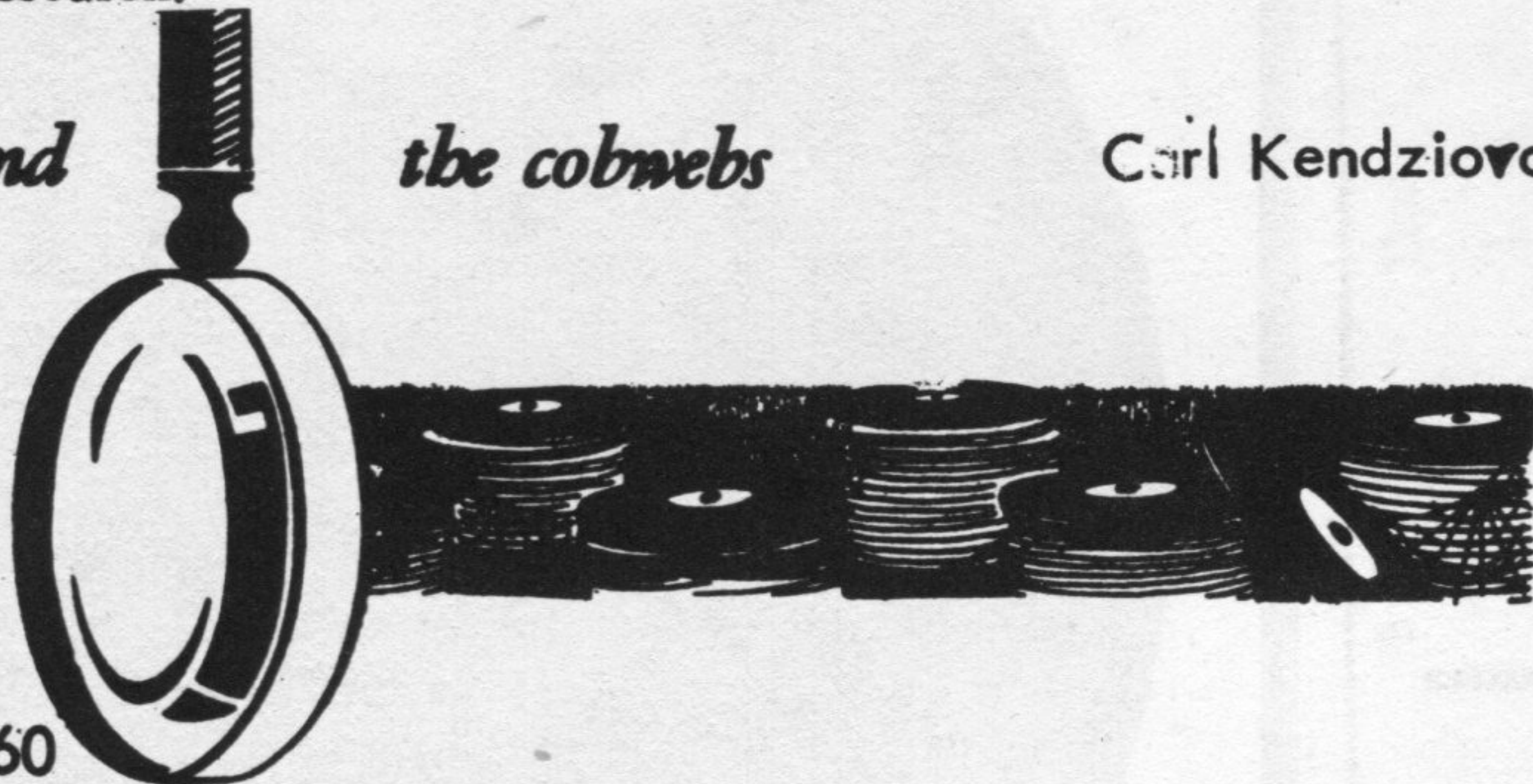
- Illustration of one of the Warner Machine Records and a special issue Titan. I am assuming this Flexible recording is Titan as Martha M. Cooper Hughes was vice-president (later president) of Titan.

in the interest of those who wish to contribute information to Mr. Cotter's worthwhile FLEXO project we have gathered previous exploratory research on the FLEXO group from Carl Kendziora's columns which have appeared in Record Research. This we believe will eliminate duplication of effort. We welcome any further listings - and any information at all - on the fascinating FLEXO group to further Dave Cotter's pioneering research.

behind

the cobwebs

Carl Kendziora



ISSUE 29
AUGUST 1960

New Flexo: Your columnist has had a few specimens of this obscure label kicking around for quite a while but has never been certain of enough facts, to go into the subject properly. We still know very little about the label or the artists but perhaps an airing of the New Flexo catalog (All four that we have!) will bring further data to light. We hope some readers will have other issues which they will list for us and perhaps someone will have information about the company or artists.

The writer has three New Flexo discs and one with no label which he has long suspected was from the same source. It is the verification of this suspicion that prompted this discussion. The first three discs are about one third as thick as a normal shellac record and are made of flexible black plastic of some sort. The "label" is simply printed on the plastic in the usual place around the spindle hole and is printed in brown. It consists of two concentric circles with the following above the spindle hole: "The New Flexo Record Warner Record Co., K.C., Mo." The catalog number is to the right of the hole and the title and artist credits are below it. The difficulty is that this printed label wears off! Only one of the three records is completely legible! The master numbers appear handwritten in the surface of the disc just inside the closed run-off groove. The one completely legible is number 303. Partly legible is 301 while the third is completely illegible. The fourth disc is a transparent green plastic with no indication that any kind of label was ever printed on it. However we now know it to be New Flexo 311. More about that later.

Here is the data for the four discs: New Flexo 301 - A. Jim Town Blues (Davis) Played by Johnnie Campbell's Orchestra (master 158)/B. Title worn off (but identified aurally as Cheatin' On Me) also by Campbell (master 154); New Flexo 303 - A. The Only Only One (Henderson) Played by Johnnie Campbell's Orchestra (master 153)/B. When I'm With You (Robinson) Sung by Harry Kessell (master 157); New Flexo? (all titling worn off) - One side is Deep Elm (You Tell 'Em I'm Blue) a vocal

with piano acc. (master 137) and the reverse is an instrumental version of a tune we are unable to identify (no one that we've played it for has recognized it either) by an unidentified orchestra (master 179). The green disc simply has master numbers 271 and 272. 271 is a fine version of Milenberg Joys and 272 we had never been able to identify.

Leon Vogel, of Washington, D.C., writes us that he has New Flexo 311 and gives the following data: Milenberg Joys (Mares-Morton) (master 271) and You Are Just A Vision (Goldkette-Quicksell) (master 272) both by Joseph Gish Orchestra. Here is what Leon had to say: "Both sides are musically good. Joseph Gish was tuba player on Muggsy early sides. The record is constructed of flexible substance and appears to be black in color but held up to the light it assumes a transparent blue color."

On the basis of the issue of "The Only Only One," "Cheatin' On Me", and "Deep Elm" on other record labels during the period from February 1925 to August 1925 we feel that these first three discs date as 1925. The #311 with its higher catalog number and master numbers one hundred numbers higher may be of 1926 vintage. They are acoustically recorded but the equipment does an admirable job; all instruments are well balanced and tone qualities are very good for acoustical recording.

Campbell's group consists of trumpet or cornet, trombone, clarinet doubling on sax, piano and drums. All are hot men and take excellent solos. There is a vocal on "Cheatin' On Me" by the same fellow who sings "Deep Elm." The piano in the band is the same as the one accompanying the singer on "Elm." On the latter, the singer interpolates "Play that thing Ty!". And Ty sure does just that! The unidentified band on master 179 is larger than the Campbell group, consisting of trumpet/cornet, trombone, two or three saxes/clarinets, piano, banjo, tuba and drums. The Gish group seems similarly constituted and may be the same group as on 179. Fine solos here, too.

That is all we can offer on the label and the artists.

ISSUE 32
JANUARY 1961

More on New Flexo: Thanks to W. H. Buck of Lawrence, Kansas and Herb Thrune of Milwaukee, Wisconsin we now have some further information on this elusive label. Also a bit of confusion it would seem ... Herb calls our attention to the Johnny Campbell listing on page 164 of the A to E loose-leaf edition of Index To Jazz. Blackstone lists five "Flexo" discs by Campbell as follows: 301 - Jimtown Blues (158); 303 - The Only, Only One (153); 304 - Tin Roof Blues (147); 305 - Where's My Sweetie Hiding (148); 307 - Charleston Cabin (176). These are described as single face, flexible discs! Well, as we mentioned in the last column, we have "New Flexo" 301 and 303 both of which are double faced discs. 301 couples "Cheatin' On Me" (154) with "Jimtown Blues" and 303 couples "When I'm With You" (157) with "The Only, Only One." Perhaps the key lies in the "Flexo" versus "New Flexo"! Maybe the original "Flexo" issues were single faced and then later were reissued on "New Flexo" as double siders with additional titles. Can anyone confirm or deny? Has anyone seen a single faced "Flexo" or "New Flexo"?

Mr. Buck tells us that very few of the New Flexo sides other than those we've mentioned are jazz. Most are light classics or religious items, mainly choirs from white churches. He cites, as an example, an 8 inch transparent green New Flexo which has no catalog number. This one is a pair of piano solos by Jack L. Crouch: "Naiads At The Spring" (Juon) (780) and "Ballet Of The Happy Spirit" (Gluck) (781). He also mentions a ragtime piano solo by Jess Sutton on New Flexo 306: "Solid Ivory" (152). (Is this a one sider? No reverse is mentioned.) Mr. Buck also states that the company credit on the Crouch item is Wabine, all others he's seen are Warner. Since the masters on the Crouch item are far higher than any of the others encountered it would appear Wabine was a successor to Warner. Anyone have anything on this?

Mr. Buck says that Mr. Campbell lives in Kansas City but he has never found him at home. We wonder if any collectors in that area would investigate this and see if any information on dates, personnel, etc. can be obtained! How about it readers?

Mr. Thrune has a 5 inch double faced translucent blue disc made by Warner Record Co., K. C., Mo. (They seem to come in all sizes) with light tan printing. This would appear to be a promotional record. The name at the top of the label is Mussehl & Westphal Mfg., Fort Atkinson, Wis. and there is no catalog number. One side is identified only as "Saw Solo" which Herb says is "My Wild Irish Rose" accompanied by a good piano. Master is 239. The reverse is a Saw Duet, master 238-2. Herb says this is "Way Down Upon the Swanee River" with the saws accompanied by a hot piano playing sort of the way Bennie Moten's record of "Get Low Down Blues" starts out. Then Herb also has a 9 3/4 inch (another size!) blue plastic with tan print disc with the name Unity and credited to Unity School of Christianity, K. C., Mo. This is number 401: A. The Old Fountain/A Healing Song/Sung by Mrs. Floyd Robbins/Orchestra Accomp. Master is 224. The B side is The Lord's Prayer Sung by Male Quartette and has no master number.



ISSUE 66

FEBRUARY 1965

Utter frustration has set in. We've been vainly searching for some correspondence sent by readers pertaining to the New Flexo label. Mr. Weber, of Olympia, Washington, sent us a Flexo issue. We've found the record but not the letter which we're sure he sent us. And there may well be one or two other letters on the New Flexo subject which are still among the missing. But we'll barge in with what we do have. For previous facts about New Flexo refer back to this column in issues 29 and 32.

Martin Pahls, of Kent, Ohio, writes about a New Flexo jacket he has and says, "The New Flexo jacket is a thin, stiff cardboard; it has a label-hole on the front only, leading to the suspicion the record inside was single-faced. Unfortunately the back carries no list of records or other printing. The front carries a logo over the hole, plus instructions to 'keep record lying flat' and 'play with new steel needle' and, in a box at lower left, 'never play a Flexo record with a needle that has played a hard shellac record... the hole in the centre of the record is made purposely small so that it will fit the centre-pin snugly...' Finally, the address... 'recorded and produced by Unity School of Christianity (record dept.), 917 Tracy, Kansas City, Mo.'"

Then we have Dave Cotter, of San Jose, California, who says he is working on the New Flexo label. Dave adds some more New Flexos: A sample which couples My Best Girl (D-4) with an unknown title (D-128) with no artist credits (Dave says D-4 has a vocal duet and D-128 is probably Johnny Campbell); New Flexo 302, Tell Her In The Springtime (159) and Somebody Loves Me (D-127) both by Johnnie Campbell's Orchestra; New Flexo 307, California Blue (D-125) by "Billy" Adair with piano acc. by Tike Kearney and Charleston Cabin (176) by Johnnie Campbell's Orchestra; New Flexo 308, O Katharina (175) and No Wonder (174), both sung by Harry Kessell with Johnnie Campbell's Orchestra. Then, he also has Unity 400, The Prayer of Faith (229) by Otis L. Newton with Orch. Acc. and The Unity Workers Song (227) by "Tenor" with Orch. Acc.

Then Dave tells about another Flexo company. Again we quote, "The company I'm referring to is the Pacific Coast Record Corp. which was active from 1931 to 1933 - then manufactured under the name Titan until 1939. During the 1931-33 period, this company put out records called Flexo. These discs were indeed flexible (a composition similar to New Flexo but a shade thicker) and came in all different sizes and wild colors. Sizes were 3 3/4", 6 1/4", 8 1/4", 9 3/4", 10", 10 1/4", 10 3/4" and 12" and colors included black, red, green, pink, turquoise and deep pink."

Dave continues, "All of the Flexo's in my collection are two-sided with the exception of one which is a Christmas (1932-1933) promotional record with one of the executives of Flexo (Martha M. Cooper-Hughes) giving out with her Christmas greetings. There's a good orchestra in the background-possibly Lew Reynolds or Jack Coakley. This record is one-sided and does not mention either the name Flexo or Pacific Coast Record Corp. One other bit of info - Flexo recorded at both 78 and 33 1/3 RPM."

Dick Weiss, Jr., of Cleveland, Ohio, writes of two Flexo records he found in Cleveland. He doesn't mention their size but they are both green plastic with printing in blue and are both at 33 1/3 RPM with two tunes on each side in the case of the pop material. Apparently there is no catalog number on these records; each has only "Series Q" and "33 1/3 R.P.M." plus the title and artist credits. One couples Pagliacci - Fox Trot Overture (404) with Hungaria (405) and the other Happy Days & Bye Bye Blues (408) with Singing A Song To The Stars & Cheer Up (409). All four sides as by Jack Coakley's Flexo Recording Orchestra.

The one sent me by Mr. Weber is at 78 RPM on orange plastic and is 8 1/4" in size with printing in green. It is cut from inside out (has a big "Start Here" printed in the space between the bottom of the label border and the grooves) and also has no catalog number! Masters are not printed anywhere - just indented into the surface of the wax outside the label area. Data for this disc: Forget (Mosley) (577-2) by Jimmie Mosley and Guitar coupled with Just My Sweetie And Me (Mosley) (565) by Jimmie Mosley and Ukelele.

Going back to New Flexo 307 by "Billy" Adair with piano acc. by Tike Kearney, Dave Cotter commented, "Could be the 'Ty', you were wondering about in issue 29." I would suspect he's right and that this does identify the fine piano man who accompanied the singer on Deep Elm and who seems to be the piano in the Johnnie Campbell orchestra. Could be the singer on Deep Elm and on the Campbell Cheatin' On Me is Adair.

That is the story so far. Now who can provide anything further on Tike Kearney, "Billy" Adair, Wabine, Warner Record Co., Kansas City or Pacific Coast Record Corp., San Francisco? I believe one of the missing letters I've been unable to locate stated that the writer was able to confirm that there was a definite link between New Flexo of Kansas City and Flexo of San Francisco. We await further comment.

ISSUE 68

MAY 1965

New Flexo: Bob Healy, of Alamosa, Colorado, sends data on another of the New Flexo issues. See last column for our most recent remarks on this label, and add this to it. We'll quote Bob: "I have a 5 inch blue plastic flexible disc. No release numbers as it is an advertisement for 'Subantenna'. Subantenna Song (master 717)/Annie Laurie (master 716). Both sides as by The Subantenna Crusaders (Quartette). Wabine Co., K.C., Mo., Mfrs. Compliments of Cloverleaf Mfg. Co., 2714 S. Canal St., Chicago, The Makers of Subantenna Underground Antenna System. John Clark, emcee on side 717 announces, 'This is Westinghouse Radio, KYW, Chicago, presenting the Subantenna Song sung by The Subantenna Crusaders.' Thanks for the data Bob. We apparently have to get lots of advertising discs to get the masters of these records as they seem to have produced a great many commercial discs in addition to regular catalog issues. It would seem that compiling a master file of Flexo and New Flexo will not be easy! We appreciate all reports of any of these discs from anyone having or seeing them.

ISSUE 69

JULY 1965

Flexo and New Flexo (cont.): Here's more on the story of New Flexo and Flexo which we have been beating our literary gums about in this column in issues 29, 32 and 66. Dave Cotter, of San Jose, California, is really doing a job on unearthing facts about these labels and we will report on the latest facts by quoting heavily from Dave's latest letter to us.

Here's what Dave has to tell us: "Here's more and the latest info on the Flexo-New Flexo thing. There IS a most definite link. The gentleman's name is J. J. Warner. This is the story as I've pieced it together so far. Warner started the New Flexo label in Kansas City around 1926 (?). Don't know how long this lasted or even if he produced recordings before this. Anyway, he was a sound engineer and the 'flexible record' was of his own design. I'm sure that the Unity label was his also. Nothing is known then until late 1929 when the Pacific Coast Record Corp. was drawn up in San Francisco and stock in the company was issued. I don't believe that any actual recording was done until 1930. Again our friend J. J. Warner is the man behind the company but only in the capacity of recording engineer and technical advisor. The officers of the company were apparently the financial backers of Flexo. From what I can find, there was quite a turn-over in the officers until the demise of the company in 1938 or 1939, under its new name of Titan. Interesting to note that at this time, the company was only making radio transcriptions and advertising recordings (also for radio). I'm not sure if Warner stayed on with the company until it folded or left sometime before. But he did freelance for a while until sometime in the early 1940's, when he started the Warner Automatic Voice Studio (also in San Francisco). The only specimen I have of this shows it to be a home-type recording (composition is pressed cardboard with a light shellac coating) similar to what might be found in one of these Record-Your-Voice machines in penny arcades. The recording is of very poor quality and reproduces the voices of three girls talking, laughing and singing. There is a penciled in date on the label which indicates it was recorded 3/10/45. And, of course, no master number appears.

"Getting back to the Pacific Coast Flexo, the many colors that were used had nothing to do with any particular series. I have come across several identical recordings which were pressed in different colors. The reason for the color was that J. J. Warner felt that the customers would be attracted to these bright colors and therefore would buy. I have, as yet, no idea of where these records were sold, nor for how much they were sold for. Only that many of these recordings were sold and shipped to South America.

"That series Q, which Mr. Weiss mentioned, was probably a 12" disc used in one of the Fox theaters as intermission-exit music. Jack Coakley, who was also musical director for Flexo, has told me that on these theater recordings, as many as 30 musicians would participate. The series Q was only Flexo's way of identifying these special records. I have a series C and a series O recording.

"Here are some additional recordings ...

UNITY 402 (about 9½" and dark blue)

In the Garden (256)/God Is Love (258) - McDowell Sisters ("Sweethearts of the Air")

NEW FLEXO No Number (about 8½" and translucent blue)

Just Like A Butterfly & Sing Me A Baby Song (934) - Frank Culman (acc. by Red Norvo). The Rosary (935) - Frank Culman. (Note: no acc. credits are given for (935) but there is a piano acc. but the style is different from (934). This info has been given to me by Jim Dixon, Marietta, Ohio.

FLEXO (?) Test (?) - no label - no titles - no artists

Boneyard Shuffle (918)/China Boy (919) (Note: both sides are done by the same group - possibly Lew Reynolds - and it's the best Red Nichols' sound I've heard since Red himself made these tunes. The drummer (probably Dick Miller) sounds like a carbon copy of Vic Berton on the Boneyard side. The record was most likely not issued as upon listening one can hear foot tapping quite distinctly. Also on the Boneyard side, the gain was turned up much too high for the bass solo.)

"That's about all for now. I expect to be getting more info on Flexo real soon, and when I do, I'll be sure to give you and the readers of RR all of the findings. Will also follow up with a more complete listing of Flexo, Unity, New Flexo, Titan, etc."

Our thanks to Dave for all this data and his continuing research on this obscure subject! We await further details. Dick Raichelson, of San Francisco, sends details on two Flexo items in his collection as follows: Flexo 133 (8" green disc) - I'm No Account Any More (Dave Oppenheim) (B 740 A) Lew Reynolds Flexo Recording Orch., vocal refrain - Jack Dean/Casey Jones (-) (B 742 2) Novelty Arrangement as played by Lew Reynolds Recording Orch.; Flexo No Number (10" red disc with no catalog number and no master numbers) Brother Bob Frolic, Part 1/Brother Bob Frolic, Part 2.

Finally, Bill Thompson, of Sunnyvale, California, sent us data on three other Flexo issues. Flexo 134 (8½" green) - I Surrender Dear (8-750-A)/Would You Like To Take A Walk (8-741-A) Lew Reynolds Flexo Recording Orch., vocals by Jack Dean; Flexo 138 (8½" green) Ho Hum (1100)/You Don't Need Glasses (1199) Lew Reynolds Flexo Recording Orch., no vocals; Flexo 148 (8½" black) Mr. Froggie (1317) Azul (Blue Night) (1088-1) by Jack Stillman & His Royal Troubadours, whose masters are NOT from Paramount and are unidentified!

ISSUE 70

August 1965

LABEL OF THE MONTH! We've been listing so many New Flexo records in the previous two columns that it seems appropriate to have that label as this month's entry in the LOM category. So, here is the New Flexo label! The records are made of flexible plastic and the "label" is printed on this plastic and not on paper. Our illustration is of New Flexo 303, of black plastic about one fourth the thickness of a regular shellac disc and the "label" is printed on the surface in brown. Full data for this record: A. The Only Only One (Henderson) (153) - Played by Johnnie Campbell's Orchestra/B. When I'm With You (Robinson) (157) - Sung by Harry Kessell. This one is credited to Warner Record Co., K. C., Mo. We've had reports that some are credited to Wabine (Record Co.?) but so far we've not seen any of these.

The preceding Kendziora columns are progress reports on Flexo and affiliates through the years. Some of the correspondents addresses (including Dave's) has changed. As you may note in Dave Cotter's present work herewith in issue 118, that his advance research has refined many of the Flexo statistics and has added a degree of continuity.

We have taken the liberty to give Dave Cotter's fascinating Flexo project the full issue. In our next issue we will continue with the regular columns. We hope to present reports of the 1972 Institute of Jazz Studies and the 1972 Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival lavished with loads of photos. The Fred Waring Victor discog. is still in the last minute preparation state. We have some fine Bob Healy "Western" research on tap too. Cheers!

ISSUE 87

DECEMBER 1967

ODD BITS OF DISCOGRAPHICAL POOP

from George Blacker, Cheshire Conn.:

3. A fragment of information re New Flexo Records: Warner Record Company, listed as their producer, was located in Kansas City, Mo. This info gleaned from the label of another curiosity recorded by them:

Mussehl & Westphal (Mfg., Fort Atkinson, Wis.)

A(234) - "Marr-Hoo-Baw"

B(281) - "Slide-Trumpet-Sax"

Record is 4½" diameter, made of plastic which, when held to the light, is seen to be a deep blue, like my New Flexo. The A and B designations above are my own, made for the sake of systematic filing. Side A is apparently a Hawaiian guitar and ukulele duet, melody not known to me. Side B is a kazoo and banjo duet of "Old Black Joe". Both sides were recorded at less than 78 rpm, and fidelity and musicianship are both poor ... I have seen perhaps two other specimens of this make, but can recall nothing about them... Incidentally, one side of my New Flexo ("Melodies of Howard Hassler") sounds as if it were electrically recorded (Mx. 231: "Waltz" & "Druids") That's all I can toss in; further contributions invited ...

ISSUE 98

MAY 1969

from Randy Morris, No. Hollywood, Calif.

I have an interesting record here. It's a 10-inch "Flexo" record, Hollywood Flexo Record Co.

10-52-A The One Man Band
(Ted Weems-Phil Baxter)
10-54-A Is This a Zither
(Phil Baxter)

Both sides by Dean McCluskey-Billy Grantham and their Aces of the Air. Judging from the obscurity of the song titles, I think it's a reasonable assumption that Phil Baxter and possibly even Weems were in the band. It's electrically recorded and is pretty good jazz.

EXTRA COMMENTS NO. 1 (assisted by Ed. LK)

Aurally George Druck is a superior uptempo outfit in the Casa Loma school, fine tight ensemble resplendent with red hot jazz solos from tenor sax, clarinet, trombone and baritone sax on the Tiger instrumental - and red hot valve? trombone, trombone, trumpet (Bix-like), tenor sax and a Smith Ballew type vocal on Talk Of The Town which is the Kahn-Conn composition - same tune that Wild Bill Davison did with Benny Meroff on Brunswick.

EXTRA COMMENTS NO. 2 (assisted by Ed. LK)

Aurally this 10½ inch 78rpm has an unidentified uptempo dance band with a short hot trumpet passage (sounds like early 30s!) (tune escapes me). In the run-off grooves a number 1641 is seen. The reverse side has no label at all and is really an intriguer. The run off grooves lists that it is "1649 Test". Aurally it's a red hot Dixieland band consisting of trumpet, clarinet, valve and/or slide trombone, bass, piano, drums and violin (solos galore). It's recorded at 33 rpms and is over 9 minutes in duration. The three tunes in sort of a medley presentation are Call Of The Freaks (Stick Out Your Can, Here Comes The Garbage Man) with vocal refrain from the boys, Darktown Strutters Ball and Nobody's Sweetheart. Drummer sounds like Ben Pollack. The hot violinist does not sound like Joe Venuti.

LAST MINUTE ADDITION!!

That unidentified side listed above is by FAY ELLIOTT AND THE NEW YORKERS (Thanks to superior ocular detection by co-editor Bob Colton) - and the tune they do is "RAIN ON THE ROOF". - - - Now, who's the Dixieland Musicians on the unusual 33 rpm reverse side.